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Application No. 10/601,007

Filed: June 20, 2003

TC Art Unit: 1744

Confirmation No.: 5771

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A method for sterilizing a surface of a packaging material by using a high voltage pulse power source, comprising a power source for generating high voltage, a ~~discharge~~ sidehigh voltage electrode to which the high voltage generated by said power source is applied, and a ground side electrode arranged so as to be opposed to the discharge side of the ~~discharge~~ sidehigh voltage electrode, in which the packaging material to be sterilized is placed between both electrodes under normal temperature and normal pressure, and is sterilized by applying high voltage pulses in a gas atmosphere, characterized in that water or an aqueous solution is ~~given to~~ disposed onto said surface to be sterilized of the packaging material before discharge, during discharge, or before and during discharge.

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8. (Original) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said water or aqueous solution is given to said packaging material so as to cloud the surface of said packaging material.

9. (Previously Presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said gas is at least one kind of gas selected from a group of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, air, argon, and helium, and the gas is humidified with said water or aqueous solution and introduced before discharge, during discharge, or before and during discharge.

10. (Currently Amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said ~~discharge~~ sidehigh voltage electrode is provided with unevenness having continuous projections on the discharge side surface of said ~~discharge-side~~ high voltage electrode.

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11. (Previously Presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said unevenness on the discharge side surface is formed into a helical form.

12. (Previously Presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said packaging material is a container or a film.

13. (Currently Amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said packaging material is a container, and the ~~discharge side~~high voltage electrode is inserted in the container.

14-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that said gas is at least one kind of gas selected from a group of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, air, argon, and helium, and the gas is humidified with said water or aqueous solution and

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introduced before discharge, during discharge, or before and during discharge.

30-32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 29, characterized in that:

said ~~discharge side~~high voltage electrode is provided with unevenness having continuous projections on the discharge side surface of said ~~discharge side~~high voltage electrode;

said unevenness on the discharge side surface is formed into a helical form;

said packaging material is a container or a film;

said packaging material is a container, and the ~~discharge side~~high voltage electrode is inserted in the container.

34-35. (Canceled)